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"We must be born again."

# REGENERATION:

Its Nature, Conditions and Concomitants

INCLUDING

A BOLD EXAMINATION OF THE DOCTRINES OF JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION, THE  
DOUBLE WORK, ORIGINAL SIN, ADOPTION, DIVINE GUIDANCE, ETC.

BEING

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# REGENERATION:

## ITS NATURE, CONDITIONS, AND CONCOMITANTS.

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BY REV. T. L. WILKINSON.

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THE doctrine of inspiration, that man is a fallen creature, exceedingly prone to evil, finds ample illustration and confirmation in the history, observation, and experience of our race. The doctrine of the existence and sovereignty of God is just as plainly revealed and as clearly manifest. We are safe, therefore, in assuming—First, the moral government of God; and, secondly, the depravity of man.

But the inspired oracles speak not only of human depravity, but of human redemption. By this latter term is meant, in general, the entire scheme of divine wisdom and grace designed and provided as a means of recovery. Necessarily such a scheme presents various aspects, and may be viewed from different standpoints. It was disobedience to the sovereign on the part of the subject, or antagonism to the divine on the part of the human, that induced our depravity and rendered redemption necessary. This disobedience of the creature to the Creator is what we call sin, and is, in fact, the very essence of sin; and if we regard sin as a disease, redemption is the divine remedy for this disease. But in providing a remedy for sin, regard must be had to the claims of law and the maintenance of authority, as well as to the efficiency of the remedy itself.

In considering the subject of redemption, therefore, the two principal standpoints will be the divine and the human, and the two great divisions of the subject, atonement and regeneration—atonement to meet the demands of the law, and regeneration to meet the demands of our depravity; or, atonement to uphold the authority and vindicate the character of the ruler, and regeneration to improve the character of the subject. The topic we propose to deal with at present, however, will include the latter general division only, the term regeneration having

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#### REGENERATION.

been employed thus far in a comprehensive sense to describe the entire subjective results of redemption through the operations of divine grace in the soul of man.

It will be necessary at this point, however, to premise that divine and human governments, while similar in some respects, essentially differ also in their nature and designs. Human government aims chiefly at the regulation of conduct; the divine, at the formation of character. Human government contemplates the adjustment and management of temporal or earthly affairs; the divine, the development and advancement of spiritual interests. Human government proposes to harmonize and adjust men's relations to each other, chiefly as social beings, or members of the State, enforcing the right and suppressing the wrong by civil or physical disabilities, called pains and penalties; the divine aims at the procurement and perpetuation of men's harmonious relations to one another and to God, chiefly as moral beings, securing the right and suppressing the wrong, not by physical pains and penalties, but by implanting and fostering unselfish principles and holy affections in the heart, so that every subject shall not only be instinctively and supremely loyal to his sovereign, but helpful and kind to his fellow-subjects. Human governments, therefore, are secular and temporal, the divine government is moral and eternal. These considerations will help us to understand why human governments can be satisfied with restitution and penalty, or where restitution is impossible, with penalty alone. Also, why the divine government can only be satisfied with reformation of character and renewal of nature. Without this the divine government can never be satisfied, either in this world or the world to come, hence the doctrine of eternal penalty, in the absence of regeneration, is a necessary corollary of divine government. The inflexible justice of God being an essential and conspicuous element in the divine administration, no remedy for human failure or rebellion seems conceivable in the absence of atonement, or vicarious interposition, hence we have this doctrine as developed in the Word of God. And it is equally inconceivable how, under such a government, any remedy could be satisfactory that was not subjectively applied in the purification and renewal of the rebel nature, restoring it to a state such as that from which it had apostatized, hence we

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have this doctrine of regeneration as also developed in the Word of God. To put this whole matter in a concrete and comprehensive form, let us conceive of human redemption under the figure of a tree, redemption itself being the trunk and atonement and regeneration its two principal branches. This view of the subject vitally links all the different parts of the system together, and not only justifies, but seems to require, their joint consideration. The atonement branch, however, or objective redemption, usually called redemption by price, I repeat, we shall be obliged to dismiss with this intimation of its place and power in the general scheme, and confine our remarks to subjective redemption, or redemption by power.

But, like redemption itself, regeneration is presented under different aspects, and will require to be viewed from different standpoints, if we would get a clear and accurate conception of its scope, hence I have entitled my subject

#### REGENERATION ; ITS NATURE, CONDITIONS AND CONCOMITANTS.

As we have already anticipated, regeneration is the divine cure for the human disease of sin ; or, as Wesley expresses it, "It is that great change which God works in the soul when He brings it into life ; when He raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the soul by the Almighty Spirit of God when it is created anew in Christ Jesus ; when it is renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness." Or, as expressed by Richard Watson, "It is that mighty change in man, wrought by the Holy Spirit, by which the dominion which sin had over him in his natural state, and which he deplors and struggles against in his penitent state, is broken and abolished ; so that with full choice of will and the energy of right affections, he serves God freely and runs in the way of His commandments." Perhaps, however, no definition is more simple or correct than the one we have given, viz., *The divine cure of the human disease of sin* ; hence to understand what regeneration does for us we must inquire, first, what sin has done for us.

Now, sin has undoubtedly polluted our natures, for pollution is frequently ascribed to it in the Scriptures. It has also paralyzed and greatly impaired our moral powers. It is most

appropriately represented by leprosy, which was both polluting and cancerous, or corrupting and destructive. Hence, the healing of the leper is a beautiful and expressive type of regeneration. Now, when Elisha gave instructions to the Syrian leper as to his healing, he said, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." He went and washed, "and his flesh came again *like unto the flesh of a little child*, and he was clean" (2 Kings, v. 10, 14). Thus, you will observe, Naaman was both cleansed and healed, or cleansed and renewed, for his *flesh came again*, even *new flesh*, "like unto the flesh of a little child." In harmony with this, Paul says in Titus iii. 5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy He saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration and *renewing* of the Holy Ghost." Accordingly, "If any man be in Christ he is a *new creature*," etc. But man is represented as being "*dead* in trespasses and sins," meaning, doubtless, that some aspects of his condition correspond to, and are fitly represented by, death. This being so, if I have correctly defined regeneration as the divine cure of the human disease of sin, then regeneration must involve the cleansing, the quickening, and the renewal of our moral or spiritual natures, and there can be no regeneration, in the true sense of the term, in the absence of any one of these.

In regard to the scope and general aspects of this cure, Dr. William Cooke makes the following pertinent remarks: "Regeneration," he says, "is not a change in the substance of the soul, but a change in its moral qualities and dispositions. As man, by the fall, lost none of his bodily members, so he lost none of his mental faculties. He has still an understanding, though it is darkened. He has still a conscience, though it is depraved. He has still a will, though it is averse to holiness. He has still affections, though they are alienated from God. Therefore, in regeneration there is not the creation of new faculties, but the infusion of new qualities. Light instead of darkness; holiness instead of sin; love to God instead of enmity against Him; and this love becomes a principle of obedience, constraining the soul to run in the way of God's commandments." He points out that in regeneration the understanding is enlightened, the conscience rectified and quickened, the affections and

passions cleansed, and the will renewed. I would like to emphasize this last thought. The will in man is what the pilot is to the ship, the general to the army, or the ruler to the subject. It governs the man and makes all the faculties of the mind, members of the body, and to a large extent, the affections of the heart, subject to its mandate. Now, it is evident that if God is to govern man He must subjugate and control that which governs in man, viz., the will. He must control the pilot if He would guide the ship; He must govern the general if He would control the army; and the ruler if He would govern the subject. The essential thing in regeneration, therefore, is the conquest of the will. Without this there can be no harmony between man and God, and where men are at war with God there will be little harmony among themselves, hence the subjection of the will to God is a matter of supreme importance. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." "Being made free from sin, and become *servants to God*, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." In the language of Dr. Cooke, from whom I have just quoted, "As iron, when magnetized, acquires a new property, and steadily turns to the pole, so the will, impregnated by a divine principle, receives a new direction; its original tendencies are counteracted, and it habitually points toward God." This point can hardly be too much insisted upon, as in nothing are the fruits of regeneration more clearly seen than in obedience, and in nothing is its absence more clearly manifest than in disobedience. Under this new covenant the divine law is written in the heart, and becomes the controlling influence of the life; and it is manifest that perfect submission to the divine will in all things is the highest attainment in grace on the part of mankind, and all the dispensations of divine mercy look to this end. The complete conquest of the will, therefore, is not only an important but an essential element in regeneration.

#### THE CONDITIONS OF REGENERATION

are few, simple, and rational. The first is repentance. This may be defined as the soul's regret that it ever sinned, and a



supreme desire to be forever freed from sin. Or, perhaps it would be lawful to define it as a sinner's remorse of conscience on account of sin, or the relentings of his moral nature, produced by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and ordinarily through the instrumentality of the Divine Word. Observe, it is not sorrow because of having to suffer for sin, but sorrow because of a spiritual perception of its true nature, or a sight of its loathsomeness and "exceeding sinfulness," accompanied by a deep sense of aversion toward and abhorrence of it. When these feelings are sufficiently deep and strong to lead to the renunciation and abandonment of sin, unreservedly and unconditionally, it may be said to be both genuine and complete, but not till then. Again, as this attitude and experience of the soul is the result of a divine agency and instrumentality, leading the soul to yearn after Christ the Saviour, the regrets experienced are aptly denominated, "Godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of." Such a condition must be essential to salvation on the part of a sinner, (1) because it is not to be presumed that any man will voluntarily and unconditionally forsake sin until he duly apprehends its nature and enormity, and comes to "loathe" it, like Job of old, realizing that it is an injury and an offence to him. And it is manifest that no one can be saved from sin until he does forsake it, hence the theory that repentance succeeds instead of antedates regeneration must be based upon an erroneous and unphilosophical interpretation of God's Word. But repentance is necessary as a condition of salvation, (2) because it cannot be supposed that a man will earnestly seek and gratefully accept a remedy who has no keen sense of his diseased condition, or earnest desire to be healed. The poet's prayer, therefore,

"A knowledge of the sickness give,  
A knowledge of the cure,"

is philosophical as well as Scriptural, for "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of contrite spirit" (Psa. xxxiv. 18).

Another equally essential and important condition of regeneration is faith, or the apprehension and appropriation of the divine remedy—the atonement—as the only but all-sufficient

means of recovery from sin's disease, and the only but all-sufficient means of restoration to the favor and image of God. This faith is pertinently defined by D'Aubigné as "the means by which the whole being of the believer—his understanding, heart, and will—enter into possession of the salvation purchased for him by the incarnation and death of the Son of God.

. . . Or, as the theologians say, it is 'the subjective appropriation of the objective work of Christ.' If faith be not an appropriation of salvation, it is nothing; all the Christian economy is thrown into confusion, the fountains of the new life are sealed, and Christianity is overthrown from the foundations" (*Reformation*, Vol. I., p. 53).

It ought to be remarked, however, that this faith must be the faith of a penitent and not of an impenitent sinner, or a living and not a dead faith. The faith of the impenitent is simply a mental assent to the doctrinal or historic fact of atonement, but the faith that saves includes the further act of the soul in laying hold of that fact as the only but all-sufficient provision of mercy for personal cleansing and peace. The faith of the impenitent is belief simply; the faith that saves is belief and *trust*. The one thinks; the other thinks and acts. The one is convinced, but resists; the other is convinced and surrenders. The one understands; the other understands and appropriates. The one sees the curative properties of the remedy and is persuaded of their efficacy, but remains diseased; the other receives and applies the remedy and is cured. The one, therefore, is merely a theoretical or dead faith; the other is an active, living faith, and makes its possessor alive. The one only enhances its possessor's guilt and condemnation; the other insures its possessor's purity, peace, and joy. The one, though convinced that in the Father's house there is bread enough and to spare, yet remains in the "far country" among the swine, perishing with hunger; the other arises and goes to the Father, and feasts upon the fatted calf amid music and dancing. I need hardly add that it is the latter that is the condition of regeneration, hence those who teach that it is the former are "blind leaders of the blind," and both will assuredly "fall into the ditch."

But it will be in order here to consider somewhat more fully

## THE DIVINE PROCESS OF REGENERATION,

i.e., how, or by what agency or instrumentality, the work is wrought. It will be conceded that, in an important sense, the manner is inexplicable, "for the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." This very passage, however, unmistakably teaches that the Divine Spirit is the Author of the work. It is also, according to the margin, a being "born from above," and is frequently called a being "born of God" (see John i. 13; 1 John iii. 9; iv. 7; v. 1, 18). It is sufficiently clear from these passages that regeneration, or the new birth, is the direct work of God, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and not the result of any mere ceremony or physical operation. True, our Lord did say, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and some have conceived that, by being "born of water," He referred to Christian baptism; but a careful examination of the text will, I feel sure, convince every unbiassed mind that nothing of the kind was intended. It may be harmlessly conceded, however, that He probably *alluded* to Christian baptism, but certainly not that He taught baptismal regeneration. But we will look at the passage for a few moments, on the supposition that ritual baptism was intended by this phrase, and see what is involved. Certainly, if Jesus Christ was divine, as we assume He was, then nothing unphilosophical or absurd will be found in His utterances. Hence, if this text, when applied to ritual baptism, is found to contain absurdities, it will be a strong presumption against such an interpretation of it. Observe, He says, "Born of water *and* of the Spirit;" so that whatever is meant by water, the agency of the Spirit is not superseded or ignored. God still holds the key to the situation, in part, at least, in His own hands. In this case, however, there are two new births, one of water and one of Spirit, and our Lord might, with the utmost propriety, have said, "Except a man be born again twice, once of water and once of Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But, evidently, only one new birth is contemplated, hence if water baptism be intended here, there must be some sort of co-action on the part of the water and the Spirit,

without which neither is efficacious. In such case we must conclude that a man baptized with either water or Spirit in the absence of the other is still unsaved, else we are shut up to the presumption that the one cannot take place without the other. In this case we are compelled to suppose that neither God nor man can ever baptize without the co-operation of the other, which is supremely absurd, since it limits the prerogatives of Jehovah, contradicts the word of God, and leaves the Almighty powerless to save a soul until some human priest can be brought to apply the water: and no priest, no salvation. No matter how ripe the subject may be in penitence and faith; no matter how willing the Deity, or how great the emergency, God's hands are tied and His independent prerogative to save is gone, the machinery of mercy must stand still and devils glory in the Almighty's plight until some Peter-ified priest can bring the hydraulic key and unlock the door. If this be true, we can easily conceive of storms, or freshets, or distance, or disability, or sulkiness, or laziness, or late trains, or slow coaches, or baulky horses, or bad roads, or broken bridges, and a thousand other similar conditions, baulking the purposes of mercy, checking the flow of the streams of grace, and excluding a soul from heaven. Another absurdity involved in this interpretation is that it makes salvation to depend as much upon the acts of the body as upon the state of the heart. But if sin is a moral malady, and consists in the motives of the heart rather than the movements of the body—if it is an act of the soul, rather than an abstract physical action—as all will admit, then the remedy must be applied to the soul rather than to the body, to the spirit rather than to the flesh; hence it must be exclusively a divine, or spiritual operation, conditioned not upon any physical process, or ceremonial observance, but upon the state of the affections or heart. If this were not so, considering that men are liable not only to deceive, but to be deceived, we can easily imagine the Deity placed under the absurd necessity of saving some very impenitent and hypocritical wretches, while allowing some very sincere and contrite believers to perish outside the fold. All interpretations involving such absurdities and such consequences must be summarily rejected as erroneous.

But it appears to me that there is evidence in the passage itself that it was not intended to teach the doctrine of water-



baptismal regeneration at all. Our Lord, in the context, enunciates the universal principle of "everything after its kind." He says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Now, if the water birth is a separate and distinct process, and the same principle is applicable to it, then that which is born of water is—water. Or, if the new birth be the result of the co-action of water and Spirit, then the product must be water and Spirit—a conclusion which the advocates of that theory will scarcely care to accept. Doubtless the true meaning of the passage, and, so far as I can see, the only consistent one is, that our Lord, according to a well-understood idiom of speech, describes the same spiritual process in a twofold aspect—first, under its symbolic form, and secondly, under its spiritual, each supplementary to and explanatory of the other. We have numerous parallel cases in Scripture; *e.g.*, God says by Isaiah (xliv. 3): "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring." Certainly we are not to suppose that both water and Spirit are intended here, but Spirit only, described in the first clause by the name and under the similitude of water, and in the last without a similitude, the latter explaining the former and the former illustrating the latter. So John the Baptist, in Matt. iii. 11, says of Christ: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire," meaning, doubtless, the Holy Ghost under the similitude of, and purifying like fire. Otherwise, we have three baptisms for believers—one with fire, one with water, and one with Spirit. But the passage under review, we conceive, teaches the one only saving baptism, or birth, under the similitude of water, but really through the agency of the Holy Ghost. And there can be no reasonable doubt that this divine work is wrought in the soul of man in the very instant when he, as a penitent sinner, is brought by faith into vital contact with the atoning merits of the blood of Christ, whether this be at the time of baptism or some other time. Thus the atonement becomes the meritorious ground of regeneration, the Divine Spirit the active and efficient agent, and man the subject, or recipient, entitled to all the provisions of divine grace in time and throughout eternity. If this view be correct, then the passage might very properly be rendered, as it would doubtless

mean, "Except a man be born of water, *even* of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This rendering is supported by some eminent scholars.

In regard to the doctrine of water-baptismal regeneration, Rev. Wm. Anderson, LL.D., of Glasgow, in his work entitled "Regeneration," says, on pp. 32, 33: "Such spiritual-material *dynamics*—or, to express it more definitely, spiritual *hydro-dynamics*, or *water-power*; or, still more specifically, spiritual *hydraulics*—is a first principle of the Popish science of salvation. That priesthood of imposture believe—at least they say they do—that by water-baptism there is communicated to the soul of the infant the germ of spiritual life; and moreover, that there is no other mode of communicating it. The Anglican episcopacy makes precisely the same representation as contained in their liturgy, the Book of Common Prayer; according to the forms of which every child within their Church's pale is baptized, whether by a Low Church Evangelical, using the expressions of the prescribed formula in a non-natural sense, *i.e.*, the inverse of common sense; or by a High Church Tractarian, for once an honest man, using them in a grammatical sense. When we reflect on this, . . . especially when we reflect that, notwithstanding all the exposures which are being frequently made of the impotence of formality, there are so many who judge favorably of themselves merely on account of certain places to which they walk and in which they sit down, certain postures which they assume, certain actions which they perform with their hands, certain eatings and libations which they perform with their mouths, and certain words which they pronounce with their tongues, it will appear how much need there is of a sustained witness-bearing for the spiritual nature of Regeneration."

#### CONCOMITANTS OF REGENERATION.

Another question logically involved in my theme, and in place just at this point, is as to the relation of justification and sanctification to the work of regeneration, or where do they belong and what are their functions in the redemptive scheme? It will be noticed that I have assigned them no place as yet, though it is supremely important that we understand their nature, offices and relations in the saving plan. To this end

we will make use of the helps supplied by the old dispensation, under which the great spiritual verities of the Gospel were clearly mirrored forth by types and ceremonies. Under that dispensation God's Church was organized as a kingdom or nation. Under that kingdom the ceremonial law was enacted and administered. Under and by virtue of that law, the Levitical priesthood, typical of the divine priesthood of Christ, was appointed and officiated, and under that law people were both justified and sanctified; hence justification and sanctification had their birth, in an important sense, under law, and both have reference to the divine government, and cannot be properly interpreted if divorced therefrom.

Justification especially, we are told, is a law term, implying a process at law, issuing in an official declaration of innocency concerning some one accused of crime. As in ancient times, however, kings generally exercised judicial functions, the very term itself suggests the threefold idea of king, culprit, and law. The governmental idea, involving regal and judicial prerogative, not only existed under the old dispensation, but is also carried over from the old dispensation into the new, for the Church is now called "the kingdom of God," and Christ is not only King, but Judge, for "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." But because of the analogy between legal and evangelical justification, we will use a case of the former as an illustration of the latter, and at the same time note the differences.

#### LEGAL JUSTIFICATION.

Suppose a man in a human court of law arraigned under a charge of murder. The indictment is read and the trial proceeds. The witnesses are numerous and highly credible, while their testimony is direct, specific, and harmonious; so much so that the counsel for the defence induces his client to confess his crime and ask for the clemency of the court. The judge accordingly pronounces the official sentence of condemnation with such penalty as the law prescribes. It is evident that this man is not justified, but found guilty and condemned. But another man is arraigned, charged with the same crime. The witnesses are few and unreliable; their evidence is vague, circumstantial, and contradictory, and the evidence of rebuttal is so conclusive

that the man's innocence is clearly and undeniably established. The verdict is unanimously for acquittal, the judge pronounces the prisoner innocent, congratulates him on the completeness of his vindication, and discharges him from custody. He, accordingly, walks out of court amid the cheers and congratulations of the spectators—justified. This, however, it will be seen, is a case of legal justification, which, in some important respects, differs from evangelical. In this case there is a charge of guilt, but it is proved untrue, and the man is justified on the ground of his innocence. In

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the charge is confessedly true, and on the ground of native innocence the sinner could never be justified. He stands in the same relation to the law as the first prisoner in my supposition. He is charged with crime, proved guilty, and admits his guilt. Yet even he, by the provisions of divine grace, is "justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses." How is it done, and what does it involve? Is he merely pardoned? Let us see. Take the case of the murderer again. Suppose the royal prerogative to pardon is invoked and exercised in his case, and on receiving the royal parchment he is released from prison and goes forth into society with the pardon in his hand. Is he justified? Is he less truly a murderer, stained with a fellow-creature's blood, than he was while locked behind the prison bars? In other words, has any change been effected in his nature or character? Certainly not, hence he is not justified in any sense analogous to God's method of justifying. True, Noah Webster says that to justify, in a theological sense, is "to treat as just, though guilty and deserving of punishment; to pardon; to absolve." This definition, however, can hardly be accepted as orthodox, since God cannot be supposed to *treat* as just persons who are "guilty and deserving of punishment." If that were justification, then the justifying act is only a blind, exceedingly compromising to the character of God, and the saints in heaven would be left to all eternity "guilty and deserving of punishment." This is what Rev. Benjamin Field, in his "Hand-book of Theology," calls "improper, or secondary, justification." Dr. Cooke defines evan-



gelical justification as "absolution from the guilt we had contracted, from the punishment to which it had justly exposed us, and restoration to the divine favor" (*Theology*, p. 361). He also says of justified persons, that they "are as free from the imputation of sin as Adam was when he first inhaled the salubrious air of Paradise, and in his innocence rejoiced in communion with God. Hence the apostle exultingly asks, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.' 'Our sins, though once as scarlet, are as white as snow; though red like crimson, they are as wool.'" In fact, we cannot conceive of a man as being justified in the sight of God who is not truly just, or righteous; and how God can reckon, or "treat," a man as righteous who is not truly so is equally inconceivable. Justification, then, in an evangelical sense, involves the innocence, the *actual* and *absolute* innocence, of the justified person. It does not necessarily imply the *making* of him innocent, but the declaring of him so; and in this respect corresponds with legal justification. Nor is it supposable that God could *declare* a man innocent before he was made so, hence we can have no such thing as evangelical justification without some anterior provision and process for making men innocent. It would be a misleading and deceitful use of words to declare a sick man well whose disease remained uncured; and any physician who would proceed on such a principle, and undertake to "treat" a man as cured who was still sick, would soon find himself in a court of law, but not in a state of justification. Nor must we impute conduct to God such as would ruin the character of a man. When God pronounces a man just, we are to presume that he is so, without any imputation of sin whatever; yet the making of him just, I repeat, is no part of the justifying act. Our next inquiry, therefore, must needs be, How is the man made innocent? We have no earthly parallel for illustration, hence we will attempt to supply an imaginary one. Suppose, *e.g.*, that the king, in the case of that murderer, could, by some magical, chemical, or psychological process, thoroughly purify him by extracting not only the guilt of his crime, but the very murderous instinct itself; and suppose he could "blot out," not only from the calendar of the court, but from the character and conscience of the man, all stains, traces and consequences of the

crime, and leave him as pure and free from guilt as if the crime had never been committed, then it is evident that he could justify him before the law, and that, too, in a sense analogous to evangelical justification. This mysterious process, however, would not be the justifying act, but only an operation essential and preparatory to that act, and for want of a better name let us call it *Regeneration*.

Now, God is able, not by magic, not by chemistry, not by psychology, nor by witchcraft, but "by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," thus to cleanse and change men; and He never justifies, nor *can* He justify, a man not thus regenerated. To do so would logically involve a lie, consequently all justified persons are regenerated, and all regenerated persons are justified. Justification, however, does nothing for us, inwardly. It simply determines our legal standing, while regeneration determines our moral standing. Justification deals with law, regeneration with our nature. As Dr. Cooke expresses it, "Justification is a change in our *relation* to God (as Sovereign); regeneration is a change in our personal state, our affections, and character (nature). Justification is the removal of the *guilt* we had contracted; regeneration is the subjugation of our natural depravity by the agency of the Holy Spirit. Justification removes the *penalty* the law denounces; regeneration implants a principle of obedience to the precepts the law enjoins. Justification is a restoration of the soul to God's favor; regeneration is a restoration of the soul to His image" (*Theology*, p. 416). And the one cannot exist apart from the other in the case of a person who has sinned. A justified man must be a regenerated man, and a regenerated man must be a justified man. It will be seen, therefore, that in an important sense justification is a result of regeneration; or, in other words, that the legal act is based upon the regenerative work, and the regenerative work upon the atonement of Christ.

And now, with regard to sanctification, it will be proper to inquire what relation it sustains to regeneration. Is it a separate and distinct work performed at a different time, or is it, like justification, contemporaneous with, and inseparable from, the new birth? It is agreed on all hands that sanctification and holiness mean the same thing, and it is also agreed that

holiness imports, in general, purity, or the absence of sin. The term sanctify is explained by our theologians to imply two things; first, to separate an object from a profane or common use, and secondly, to devote it to a holy and religious use. This rather describes the sanctifying process, however, and under the old dispensation this process generally involved the laying of the devoted object upon God's altar, and the altar, objectively, "sanctified the gift." Beet, in his excellent treatise on this subject, explains holiness to imply God's exclusive ownership of an object, such object being recognized as entirely devoted to His use and service. Now, the altar was God's receptacle for gifts offered to Him, even as a man's hands are receptacles for gifts offered to him. When an object was received, therefore, upon the altar, it was virtually put into God's hands, and being then looked upon as His it was objectively holy. So when God receives the offering we bring to Him in faith, as we "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Him," He communicates the grace that makes us inwardly, or subjectively, holy. His acceptance and possession of us imply and involve this; therefore, whosoever is accepted of God in Christ, being devoted to His service, is holy, not merely in an objective, but also in a subjective sense. The process leading up to this result is partly human and partly divine. The practical separation of ourselves from sin, and the practical consecration of ourselves to God, is our own act, and thus far man may be said to sanctify himself, or present himself "holy" (see Lev. xi. 44; xx. 7; and Rom. xii. 1). But the separation of sin from us, and the acceptance of our persons and "reasonable service" is God's act, and in this sense it may be said that God sanctifies us. It will be seen, therefore, that in this as well as all other developments of divine grace in the soul, there is co-action between God and man, and in our attempts to define and comprehend such questions we will do well always to bear this fact in mind.

But the point to be decided is as to when this work of sanctification is wrought, and the result called holiness reached. If holiness is the absence of sin, then it must ensue when sin is removed; and sin is removed, as we have shown, by regeneration, therefore holiness must begin at that time. "Being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit

unto holiness." Does not this passage mean and teach that separation from sin and consecration to God's service results in a state of holiness just as the blossom on the tree culminates in fruit? God says by the same apostle, as quoted from the prophets, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." Now, when does this process take place? Is it at the time of our regeneration, or at some subsequent period? It must be when we are regenerated, or "born of God," that we become the "sons of God;" and, according to this passage, it is when we "separate ourselves from the unclean thing," or sin, that God receives us, which, we have shown implies holiness; and it is then that He becomes our Father, and makes us His sons and daughters, and all this implies regeneration. Besides, regeneration is evidently the begetting of "the new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24). This passage manifestly teaches the presence of "true holiness" on the part of those who are born again, and we have shown that justification, which is cotemporaneous with regeneration, also implies it. "Being made free from sin," therefore, "and become servants to God, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Doubtless, then, the regenerated person is holy, and regeneration and sanctification, as well as regeneration and justification, in fact, regeneration, justification and sanctification are cotemporaneous and inseparable, the one never existing in man apart from the others; and this, all our best theologians admit and teach. Besides, it is inconceivable that a sinner can be cleansed from sin, renewed in nature, and adopted into the divine family, who is not separated and cleansed from sin, and consecrated to God, and these things we have shown to be involved in the idea of holiness. Hence we infer that the state of holiness begins with regeneration.

But is sanctification a different process, or work of divine grace, from regeneration, or is it a result of the same process? I reply, regeneration describes or involves the process, and sanctification expresses one phase of the result, just as washing describes a process, and purity the result; or killing a process, and death the result; or quickening a process, and life the result. Regeneration has to do with our nature—cleansing, quickening,



renewing it; sanctification describes the sum of these operations as developed in our character. Regeneration cures and eradicates the disease of sin from the soul; the state of spiritual health which ensues is called sanctification. Let me illustrate this whole question in this way. Suppose we are under the old dispensation, where there was a temple for religion and a throne for government. The king upon the throne represents law; the priest in the temple represents character, and, in addition to these, there is a prophet or teacher, one of whose functions it is to explain and enforce duty. Suppose a person who has transgressed the law coming to the king, asking pardon for his crime and protection from its consequences. The king is inflexible, because he is just, and says, I would be merciful if I could, but I cannot at the expense of justice. So far as my prerogatives are involved, the law must take its course, and the penalty must be inflicted, for the law says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die!" With this, he lifts his sword to execute the sentence, but the trembling criminal turns to flee away, when, lo, he meets a man arrayed in robes like unto a prophet, and cries out to him, "What must I do to be saved?" The prophet bids him hie to yonder temple, and tell the priest his tale. The priest immediately slays a victim, makes atonement for his sin, and on condition of future loyalty and obedience sprinkles him with the blood, cleanses him at the laver, gives him a white stone—token and pledge of his purification—and thus certificated sends him back to the king for his benediction. When the king sees him now, and receives the proof of his cleansing, he sheathes his sword, his judicial anger is appeased, his countenance becomes benignant, his throne of justice becomes a throne of grace, and he pronounces the criminal absolved and guiltless. He can now be just, because of what the priest has done, and at the same time the justifier of every one who is thus cleansed in the temple. Observe, it is the king's business to absolve men, and pronounce them just; it is the priest's business to cleanse them, and pronounce them pure. "Go show thyself to the priest," said Jesus to the cleansed leper, "and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." To justify, then, is a kingly function; to regenerate and sanctify a priestly. But separation from sin and consecration to God as King, were required by the priest before he could cleanse and sanctify, and cleansing

was required by the king before he could justify and pardon, hence all the conditions of sanctification were involved in regeneration. The man, being regenerated, is justified when viewed from the standpoint of law, and sanctified when viewed from the standpoint of character. Look at him from the throne, and he is justified; look at him from the temple, and he is sanctified, or holy. Now this is only illustrative, for under the new dispensation the offices of Prophet, Priest and King centre in one person—Christ. This is beautifully set forth in prophecy by Zechariah (vi. 12, 13): "Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH: and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne: and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." The word "both" here doubtless means the king and the priest, the throne and the temple, the regal and sacerdotal departments of the divine administration. The counsel of peace being between them evidently implies that they are managed, not as two rival or distinct departments of the divine commonwealth, but conjointly, under the same head and to the same end, each in its sphere contributing its part to the unity, harmony and efficiency of the whole. The king is priest, and the priest is king, hence the whole transaction involving man's salvation is performed by the same person, in the same place and at the same time. Christ is the royal priest, or sacerdotal king, "the Lamb slain in the midst of the throne," being "by the right hand of God exalted, a prince (involving rulership), and a Saviour (involving priestly functions) to give repentance to Israel, the forgiveness of sins." And because He possesses "all power" as priest and king, He is "able to save them to the uttermost" (cleanse, quicken, renew, justify, sanctify, and forever save) "all them that come unto God by Him" (Heb. vii. 25). As priest He regenerates them, as king He absolves and justifies them; and the combined result is their recovery to the state of holiness from which they fell, therefore all saved persons are regenerated, justified and sanctified.

The question very naturally occurs just here, however, Does not this theory antagonize the doctrine of the second work in order to *entire* sanctification? I answer, much depends upon

the view we take of the question. We would require to settle first, what the nature of the second work is, and what it is supposed to accomplish. Is it a new work, or is it a second instalment of an old work? If a new work, what are its peculiarities? The first accomplishes our regeneration, and involves our justification and sanctification. What additional blessing does the second work secure? The first is accomplished through the merit of the atonement, and by the agency of the Holy Ghost. What additional ground of merit, or efficiency of agent is claimed for the second work? I cannot answer these questions myself. But, perhaps it will be said that it is a second instalment of the same work, by the same agency, on the same ground of merit, and subject to the same conditions. But the first work, as I have shown, was regeneration, hence the second, according to this presentment, must be more regeneration, or a distinct work some time after regeneration to perfect it more fully, or remove some defect from it. If this be the case, then what is the nature of that defect? What did the blood of Christ and the Spirit of God fail to accomplish by the first that it is proposed to accomplish by the second? If it be true that God only partially regenerates us at the first, it must, I should say, be for one of the following reasons: (1) because He is unable to complete it at one operation; or, (2) because He sees it to be better to proceed on the two instalment plan; else, (3) that man can only meet the conditions in this way. I can conceive of no other reason for such an arrangement. Let us look at these reasons, therefore. Surely no one will rest his case on the first—God's inability, or the inefficiency of the atonement. Neither is it easy to see why God should prefer to leave some "remains of sin" in us when He regenerates us, to be a snare to us for a few months, or years, before He will remove them. Nor is it any more conceivable how it is that it requires just two efforts and no more, on man's part, to fully meet the conditions. I could understand this better myself if the number of instalments varied somewhat, according to the intelligence and faith of individuals. But, perhaps, Bishop Hedding, of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, touches the real point when he says, "Regeneration is the beginning of purification, entire sanctification is the finishing of that work. A regenerate man is (may be) kept from committing known sin; which is what is com-

monly meant in the New Testament by 'committing sin.' But he yet finds in himself the remains of inbred corruption, or, original sin, such as pride, anger, envy," etc. This he calls, further on, "the pollutions of our nature." Dr. Anderson, too, previously quoted, speaking of original sin, says, "This is the radical evil which regeneration is designed to remedy" (p. 69). Now, is not this the *real* ground of the double work theory, viz., that we have two kinds of sin to deal with, original and personal, or native and inbred, and that one operation of grace removes the one, and a separate operation is required to remove the other? But it will be seen that doctors differ as to which is removed by the one operation and which by the other. Bishop Hedding affirms that sanctification removes original sin, leaving us to infer that regeneration takes away the personal; and Dr Anderson affirms that regeneration removes original sin, leaving us to wonder whether personal sin remains after regeneration, to be taken away by sanctification, or whether sanctification precedes regeneration in his theory and removes personal sin first. Amid this confusion what are simple minded people to believe? Evidently, if we admit two kinds of sin, and a separate operation of divine grace for the removal of each, then it becomes a fair question as to which kind is removed by the one process, and which by the other, and which has precedence in point of time. Let us admit, for the sake of finding a starting point, that the blood of Christ in regeneration cleanses us from our personal sin, but that there is some deeper stain inherited from Adam, a sort of constitutional taint so inveterate in its nature that, like a chronic disease, it requires a double application of the remedy to remove it. Now, let us see where this lands us. This original sin must either be in us when we are born, and consequently inhere in infant children from their very birth, and before, otherwise it skips the infant until it reaches the line of accountability, and is then communicated. If communicated, who communicates it? We must fix the responsibility somewhere, and who will say God does it? And if such a supposition were even admissible, then let me ask what greater show of justice is there in imparting or imputing Adam's sin to the adult than to the infant, since the latter is just as responsible for it as the former? But if the devil imparts it, then surely it is original sin indeed, -



coming from the original source direct, and not through two hundred generations of men. But such a theory is too absurd for toleration, hence we will be obliged to fall back upon the assumption that this "original sin" is born in us. Then every infant has its share, and must be looked upon as essentially corrupt (I speak advisedly). The supposition is that this form of sin is so inveterate that regeneration cannot remove it. It can take away personal sin, but not this. The plain inference is, therefore, that it is worse, more deep-seated, more deadly, than personal sin, yet all infants are its subjects. What about their salvation, then? Is it secured, and how? "Without holiness no man can see God." Without regeneration to remove personal sin no man can see the kingdom of God, yet in every infant there is something so much worse than personal sin, that while one application of the atoning blood can remove the one, it requires a second application to eradicate the other! Driven to such an alternative, is it not about time to inquire, Is it true that we inherit from our first parents anything from which we require to be cleansed in order to our sanctification, which is not unconditionally removed from all men, ante-natally by the atonement of Christ? I do not ask whether we are injuriously affected by Adam's sin, or by the fall, as it is called. This will not be disputed. But I simply ask, Do we inherit anything of the nature of sin, and from which we require to be cleansed in order to our sanctification, which is not ante-natally removed by the atonement? If so, where is the Scripture proof? I have already shown that sanctification takes place at the time of regeneration, and is the result of that operation, and this is substantially conceded by all our theologians. I have also shown that cleansing is a part of the regenerative process. Now, if there is more cleansing required at that time, our regeneration must be incomplete, as well as our sanctification; and it is a second, or additional regeneration that we need, in order to a fuller sanctification. This would seem to involve something akin to a second new birth, which does not seem to be contemplated in the Scriptures. But is it true that the work of God in the souls of men is necessarily thus fragmentary? If a justified person is, and must needs be, a sinless person, then where is the propriety of speaking of "the remains of sin," and "the remains of inbred corruption, or original sin," left behind at the time of justification?

Sinlessness is sinlessness, and must include sin of every sort. Then as to original sin, we read in Rom. v. 18, 19, that "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." This passage must refer to all men as human beings, irrespective of all diversities of condition, and must be applicable, not at the end of their existence, but at the beginning; and not to individual, but to entailed sin. Either of the opposite suppositions would involve universal salvation. It plainly specifies that "judgment to condemnation" came upon "all men" by one man's offence, and that "many were made sinners" through one man's disobedience. Surely, if anything is entitled to the name of "original sin," this must be, and I know of nothing else that is. But the text with equal explicitness declares that as many as were made sinners, viz.: "All men," by Adam's disobedience, were made righteous by Christ's obedience. This, too, unconditionally. The sin was entailed by no fault of ours, and is removed without either our consent or co-operation, which is evidently the proper thing for a just God to do. If this be so, then what about the doctrine of a second work to remove "original sin, or inbred corruption?" Manifestly it must be abandoned. On the contrary supposition, what becomes of infant children who die before they are able to accept Christ as their Saviour from Adam's sin? And what has the atonement done for them? Or does God regenerate all children that chance to die in childhood, as the Calvinists suppose He does in the case of "elect children," and leave those who do not die, to grow up unregenerated, to begin their responsible existence with all the disadvantages of an essentially corrupt, or impure nature to contend against? This looks exceedingly improbable. Then, again, if this original sin, or inbred corruption, is so much more inveterate than personal guilt that it requires an extra operation on the part of the Holy Spirit to remove it, how is it that all infants as well as regenerated adults, are included in the divine family, and constituted heirs of the kingdom of heaven, while personal sin disinherits them? And how is it that the same divine remedy which at the first application is so impotent to remove this

inbred taint, is, at the second application so omnipotent? But whatever view we take of this question, it seems to be generally conceded, especially among Methodists, that regeneration contemplates the removal of personal, but not original sin, and is, therefore, not applicable to infant children. And if original sin has been removed unconditionally, by the atonement, from "all men," then the second work, if such a work be admitted, cannot be for the removal of that, but must be based upon the defectiveness of regeneration. And, seriously, does not this disparage the atonement, and indirectly the divine character? Can any satisfactory reason be assigned why the blood of the everlasting covenant should be applied to the soul of a sinner by the agency of the Holy Ghost, and cleanse him only partially, making a second application of the same blood, by the same divine agency, necessary in order to complete the work? Is it not more consonant with truth, and less disparaging to the character of God, or the provisions of His grace, to believe and teach that the divine remedy effectually cures when first applied, but requires to be continually applied thereafter, as a preventive, in consequence of our unhealthy tendencies and surroundings? If so, it follows that in proportion as this is done our spiritual health will be preserved and our spiritual strength renewed, and *vice versa*. In this case all subsequent unhealthy or defective conditions will be attributable to lapses of faith in applying the remedy, or to unwatchfulness against unhealthy conditions, rather than to defectiveness of the remedy itself.

Nor do these objections to what we regard as an erroneous theory of a second work, necessarily antagonize the *fact* of such a work—or many such works, for that matter—as an element of human experience, but they simply shift the responsibility of a piecemeal, or instalment salvation, from the shoulders of the Deity, where it does not belong, and place it on the shoulders of man, where it evidently does belong. Few human experiences are up to the divine standard, inasmuch as few Christians live up to their privileges, hence the necessity of a further work of grace to lift us up to that standard. That such a work is an essential feature of the divine plan I have failed to find. That it is a fact, and generally a necessity in human experience, I cannot doubt. Viewed from the divine standpoint, salvation is

perfect, or complete, and not fragmentary either in provision, proffer, or bestowment. It is offered to us in its entirety, and not upon the instalment plan. Few men, however, have the capacity to understand all that is involved either in Christian life or character, especially before they have entered upon it; hence most men commence and *long continue* on too low a grade; failing to comprehend, failing to grasp, and consequently failing to enjoy the fulness of their present inheritance in Christ. There is bread enough, but they feed on crumbs; water enough, but they sip it in drops; light enough, but they grovel with half closed eyes in a dim twilight; life enough, but they remain constitutionally feeble. They do not, perhaps, perpetrate known and overt acts of transgression, such as to bring serious condemnation, or perhaps their consciences are not

"Quick as the apple of an eye,  
The slightest touch of sin to feel."

hence they claim to be living in a justified state, while far below the normal mark and longing for something better. At length, peradventure, under some special awakening, they discover their low ground of character and experience, and are called upon to come up higher. They are induced to forsake their previous sluggish ways, renew their consecration to God, plume the wings of their faith for a higher flight, and the result is that they are lifted, as it were, to the third heaven of enjoyment and hope, and call it, according to their conventional vocabulary, the second blessing. The fact is, however, that they have nothing now but what they might have had from the beginning had they been able and willing to take it in; nor have they anything yet but may be augmented by successive up-mountings by faith in the future. But this "hop-toad," "leap-frog" method of ascent is the practical and not the theoretical aspect of the redemptive scheme. In other words, it is not God's plan; it is only the human outworking of the divine plan. "The path of the just is as a shining light," steadily increasing, or "shining more and more unto the perfect day." This is the divine plan. The path of the just is like a lantern, always flickering, generally burning dim, in need either of oil or snuffing, or both, and sometimes going entirely out. This is the ordinary human outworking of the

divine plan. "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed planted in the ground," growing a little every day, and gradually becoming "a great tree." This is the divine plan. The kingdom of heaven is like a toadstool, springing up in a night, and reaching its utmost growth often in a single day. This is the usual human outworking of the divine plan. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till (gradually) the whole was leavened." This is the divine plan. The kingdom of heaven is like soda put into sour milk from time to time, causing a sudden and tremendous effervescing for a little while, but soon dying away. This is the human outworking of the divine plan. Or if preferred, the one may be called ideal salvation, and the other, for want of a better term, the experimental. The difference between these two phases of the subject may be accounted for on the ground that salvation, as realized in human experience, involves not only divine but human agency, and the operations of the former are conditioned upon those of the latter, which are always more or less imperfectly fulfilled. Within the limits of human compliance, however, the divine part is, no doubt, always perfectly done; hence, whatever imperfection attaches to the work of grace in any heart, we must always be careful not to attribute it to the divine arrangement, but to the human compliance.

And does this presentation of the case antagonize the old-time Methodist doctrine of the double work? If so, I fear that old-time Methodist doctrine must have been only "going on unto perfection," but I am glad to know that it has been "growing in grace," and especially "in the *knowledge of the truth*," and it is to be hoped that it will become "perfect in this life." At all events, it would be sad for Methodism if it had gained no new light in Scripture interpretation in a century and a half.

But let us hear Mr. Wesley on this point. Speaking of a justified person, he says, "So long as he walketh in love (which he may always do), he worships in spirit and in truth. He keepeth the commandments of God, and doeth those things which are pleasing in His sight; so exercising himself as to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. And He has power both over outward and inward sin, even

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from the moment he is justified" (Sermon xiii. 4). The foregoing extract is quoted approvingly by Dr. Cooke, who expresses substantially the same sentiments.

I cannot, at present, or perhaps at any other time for that matter, answer all the objections that might be urged against the views thus advanced, but I am unable to see that they are either unreasonable or unscriptural. Those passages of Scripture so often quoted to show that God recognizes the existence of shortcomings, or the "remains of sin" in believers, and urges them on to perfection in character and life, so far from teaching that their present state is according to His own plan, only go to prove, I conceive, that it is contrary to that plan. He certainly offers a full as well as a free salvation to all men, and has expressly declared His will to be "our sanctification." Does this mean our partial sanctification for a time, and then suddenly our fuller sanctification? Or does it mean our complete sanctification from the very inception of the new life? I trust I may be pardoned for believing it to be the latter, for Christ is "able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." Not only to save them *who* come, I opine, but also to save them *when* they come, so far as uncleanness is concerned, since His blood "cleanseth us from all sin," and that, too, at the time it is first applied, "for by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified;" i.e., doubtless, in purpose and provision, and where the provision is fully accepted the purpose is fully accomplished. But nowhere, brethren, absolutely nowhere is salvation offered to us on the piecemeal, or instalment plan. However it may be received, God's will and plan are that all men should be saved and sanctified completely at all times, but men do not always perfectly co-operate with Him in the execution of His purposes, hence the defects we so often see and feel.

#### ADOPTION.

Another of the concomitants of regeneration is adoption. On this I can dwell but for a moment. Hitherto we have been breathing, for the most part, the atmosphere of the courtroom and the place of sacrifice, but now we luxuriate amid the loving associations of home. God, as sovereign, found us in a state of rebellion against Himself, and had to deal with us

as rebels. In order to save us from the consequences of our rebellion, expiation must be made, the blood (life) of a victim must flow, cleansing must be performed, guilt removed, innocence pronounced and the prisoner released. But all this savors of rigor, it smacks strongly of justice and penalty, and although the guilt is removed and the penalty averted, yet there is an air of coldness, officialism, majesty, and stateliness about it all which, while it may inspire awe and awaken gratitude, fails fully to excite and quicken the tenderer sympathies and affections of the soul. This element, thus far, is largely wanting. But the divine resources are ample to meet the manifold demands of His administration and the diversified wants of His creatures, hence the home with its fatherhood of tenderness and brotherhood of love; its larder of "fat things" and its wardrobe of white raiment; its light, its warmth, its music, its friendships, its security, its rest, its benignity, and its blessedness, both in this world and the world to come, is introduced to our notice, and we are introduced to its hallowed and hallowing associations and enjoyments. And this completes the picture, clothing it with the last needed touches of beauty, and surrounding it with the most exquisite charms. The parable of the prodigal son is the divine ideal of this scene, each believer was once that prodigal, and for each child of God that parable describes his home. Our introduction to that home may be viewed from two different standpoints. In one sense we are born into it, inasmuch as the renewal and quickening and cleansing of our moral natures *resembles* a birth. God being the author of this operation, we are said to be "born of God." But those who are "born again" of the Spirit, had a previous existence, and belonged to another family, less respectable and less refined. "Ye are of your father the devil, whose works ye do," was once true of such persons, hence the translation "out of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son," and out of the family of Satan into the family of God—"the household of faith"—because it involves the principle and resembles the act of adoption, is appropriately described by this name. It is a most suitable and suggestive term, but I cannot dwell upon it.

And now a few words, in conclusion, with regard to the minor results of regeneration. I have incidentally shown that

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both justification and sanctification, as well as adoption, were among those results, and beyond this I will be able to do little more than epitomize. Among these results I would mention peace, joy, the witness of the Spirit; fruit, implying life and growth; knowledge, especially experimental; fellowship, victory, hope, strength, guidance, and others. On this last point, however, viz.,

#### DIVINE GUIDANCE,

I ought, perhaps, in the interests of unity of thought and uniformity of teaching among ourselves, to enlarge for a little. I have no desire to antagonize any one's opinions, or teachings, but "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

1. The *fact* of divine guidance will not be denied by any one who venerates the Word of God, and I am only supposed to be dealing with such.

2. That God has various ways of guiding His people no Christian will dispute. He may be said to guide, or indicate His will by His word, His Spirit, His providence, and the counsels, instructions, and examples of His people.

3. The *degree* of guidance will be the only point, probably, on which there would be any disagreement among us, hence a few words on this point just here. God's promises, as well as His provisions and requirements, are very comprehensive. They seem to sweep the heavens like a telescope, and penetrate to the depths of infinity; and if they are to be interpreted in their most unlimited sense, they would almost deify us. Now, there must either be a limit to their meaning or no limit to our attainments. And suppose we understand them as unlimited in meaning, still it remains to decide whether the unlimited attainments involved are to be reached by one or more single bounds in this life, or by gradual advancement through this life, and on and on forever, bringing us by a gradual and perpetual process of assimilation nearer and nearer to the Deity in knowledge, character and condition. If there is any philosophy in the theory of "natural law in the spiritual world," then we would be inclined to the adoption of the latter view. If the spiritual realm is singular in this respect, involving sudden bounds from height to height, at intervals not remote from each other, bringing us by two or three tremendous leaps from incipency to

maturity, then perhaps, the former view would be preferred. Now, in this matter of guidance, suppose we take for illustration a single passage. "When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all truth." Suppose we interpret this passage on the principle of unlimited meaning and suddenness of fulfilment, and what is the result? Sudden omniscience on the part of all to whom the promise was made. Was it made to all believers, or only to the apostles who were to be the divinely inspired amanuenses of the Holy Spirit? There is room for diversity of opinion here, hence dogmatism is out of place. If made to the apostles only, then we know the phrase "all truth" must have had a limited meaning, referring to such truth only as was necessary to a life of faith and godliness. If to all believers, it could hardly be more comprehensive than this. If to all believers in an unlimited sense, then all believers are omniscient and infallible as God Himself, which is blasphemous. As a matter of fact, such a thing never has been and never can be, either in this world or that which is to come. We might as well quote Matt. v. 48; John i. 16; Eph. iii. 19, and kindred passages, and then claim that believers were to be invested with every divine attribute in its "fulness," or most absolute sense, and that, consequently, every believer could claim to be made, like Christ, "in the form of God, thinking it no robbery to be equal with God." Such presumptions represent God as divided against Himself, and open the door for unbridled fanaticism; for if these promises extend to all believers, they must not be monopolized by a few narrow-minded, self-assertive individuals, claiming a superior degree of piety and light, but they must be recognized as the common heritage of the Church, hence all her divisions and imperfections are laid at the door of the Deity, and He is made responsible for them. The Church of Rome drifted off on some such line as this, and it brought her into a somewhat anomalous predicament. She held correctly enough that God was infallible in knowledge. He had given promises of unlimited wisdom, knowledge, understanding and guidance to His Church. She claimed she was His Church, and no mistake, for her ecclesiastical pedigree was unbroken from the apostles down. The promises she interpreted without limitation of meaning, the fulfilment to be realized in time, therefore she was as infallible as God Himself,

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especially in matters pertaining to doctrine and administration. But, for hundreds of years, the trouble was to locate the infallibility. It was a sort of sheet-lightning commodity, spread all over, but somewhat thin everywhere. It was a beast of many heads, consisting of priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and popes, and some of the wisdom resided in each head; hence it was necessary, in order to focus their infallibility on any given point, to put all their heads together in a general council. But at their last general council, in 1869-70, they agreed to take all the infallible brains out of all the subordinate heads and put them into one supreme head at Rome. This was a good idea. It obviated the necessity of gathering the subordinate heads together for the exercise of their infallibility, hence it economized time, saved trouble and lessened expense. But, as Protestants, we cannot endorse the infallibility doctrine at all, whether in one head, or many heads. The theory which more readily commends itself to us is the one which teaches a gradual communication of light, and truth, and knowledge, and spiritual understanding, varying in degree according to the conditions of human capacity, study, faith, obedience, etc., much on the same principle as we increase in everything else. Persons with open eyes and ears and hearts, asking, knocking, seeking, investigating and reasoning, would naturally increase in wisdom more rapidly than those who were indifferent and listless, just as they do in temporal or earthly things. And I humbly think that this is our only safe principle of interpretation. Any other will inevitably lead us into fanaticism and error, and cause division and alienations among us. In support of this view, I submit the following considerations:

Christ had been with His disciples for some time, He had called them to follow Him; He had been their spokesman; He had confounded and silenced all gainsayers; He had proved more than a match for all cavillers; He had instructed the disciples themselves, and greatly won their hearts. But the time came when He talked of leaving them and going to the Father. This greatly troubled them, but He endeavors to comfort them. This comforting address begins with the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel: "Let not your heart be troubled," etc. In verse 12, He promises them that the works He did they should do, and greater works than He did, "because He was going to the



Father." In verses 13, 14, that whatsoever they asked the Father in his name He would do it. In verse 16, that the Father would send them "another Comforter," that He might "abide with them forever." In verse 26, that this Comforter should "teach them all things and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them," showing plainly that the promised Comforter was to come in His place, discharge His functions and, among other things, "*guide*" them, as He had been guiding them, by instruction, counsel, illumination, "into all truth" that they needed to understand, and as far and as fast as they needed to understand it, just as He Himself had been doing. But He did not tell them everything at once. He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come" (John xvi. 12, 13). Now, let any candid, intelligent student of the Word of God calmly study this latter passage in the setting we have given it, and interpret it in the light of the context, and they cannot but see that it has no reference to any guidance, or revelation in regard to the minutiae of our actions and utterances in the ordinary affairs of life. Such an interpretation seems a degradation and perversion of the text, and is not sustained by any fair principle of exegesis. Nor has such a theory of guidance, so far as history informs us, ever been realized by believers, no, not even including the apostles themselves. In fact, it is a positively dangerous and dogmatic assumption.

But, finally, whatever may be true with reference to this subject of guidance in the sphere of our personal relations to God, it must be evident to all who reason, that in matters affecting men's relations to each other, and involving their coaction in the social, secular or religious sphere, there can be no safe or satisfactory rule of action that is not equally revealed to and equally binding upon all. Anything short of this would be an anomaly in worldly affairs, and surely God is as reasonable as men. The fact is, it would be a most dangerous thing to make one person's inward impressions a divine standard of action for another. We do not even accept the utterances of those who wrote the Bible because they claim to have been inspired.

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But we carefully examine the claim, and establish their right to be heard and obeyed on other grounds. This being so, it is an unpardonable impertinence for any one to demand of me that I shall govern my conduct according to his inward impressions, until he has established his right to be regarded as an oracle from heaven by other than his own naked testimony. I should be sorry to be responsible for such a theory of divine guidance.

A distinction ought, perhaps, to be noted here between what may be termed the ordinary and extraordinary, the general and the special, or the rule and the exception. I have been endeavoring to expound the rule, but at the same time I must recognize the exceptions. In all departments of God's doings we trace this principle. *Eg.*, in the material universe results are usually produced by the slow and gradual operations of natural law, though it is generally conceded that similar results must, at some time, have been produced by the immediate creative energy of Jehovah. The former is the ordinary mode, the latter the extraordinary. In the history of His dealings with mankind effects have usually been produced by the operation of natural causes, yet all Christians recognize the existence of miracles. The former is the ordinary, the latter the extraordinary. In the communication of His will to mankind, what is called "the light of nature" may be regarded as the ordinary, inspiration or *special revelation* the extraordinary. So, I humbly think, in the matter of guidance God has His ordinary methods, such as I have already enumerated, and besides these, in case of extraordinary interest, extremity, or importance, He adopts extraordinary, or special methods. We see this illustrated in the case of sending Philip to join the Ethiopian's chariot; in sending Peter to the house of Cornelius; in sending Paul to Macedonia, and in many similar cases. But such cases, if they became the rule would cease to be the exceptions. It need not be denied, therefore, that in special emergencies God makes special impressions on men's minds, leading them to act in a certain way for the accomplishment of His special purposes, yet it will, doubtless, be perfectly safe to deny that He ever has made or ever will make this the common or ordinary mode of procedure, especially with reference to the trivial affairs of life. But I cannot enlarge on this point.